

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9773

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5101

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CI

SUBJECT: PDC DEFENDS ITSELF AGAINST GOC CHARGES AT RUMORMONGERING

REF: SANTIAGO 4952

1. SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO GOC ACCUSATIONS OF COMPLICITY IN SPREADING FALSE RUMORS, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC) ISSUED A STATEMENT JULY 5 PLACING THE BLAME FOR PUBLIC UNCERTAINTY AND MALAISE SUARELY ON THE DOORSTEP OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE GOC HAS PROHIBITED THE MEDIA FROM REPORTING IT. IN ADDITION TO THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF GOC OFFICIALS AGAINST THE PDC, THERE IS A REPORT GOING AROUND THAT PINOCHET LACED INTO FREI, THE PDC, THE CHURCH AND THE USG DURING A PRIVATE MEETING WITH CABINET MINISTERS AND FLAG OFFICERS LAST WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. GOC ACCUSATIONS: THE WAVE OF RUMORS INUDATING SANTIAGO THE WEEK THAT AMBASSADOR LANDAU WAS IN WASHINGTON PROMPTED STRENUOUS EFFORTS BY GOC OFFICIALS TO CONVINCE THE CITIZENRY THAT ALL WAS NORMAL (REFTEL). PART OF THAT EFFORT WAS TO BLAME THE RUMORS ON "CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POLITICIANS COLLUDING WITH THE COMMUNISTS." INTERIOR MINISTER FERNANDEZ SPOKE JUNE 29 OF "A GROUP OF FAILED POLITICIANS WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE GOVERNMENT SUCCESSES." SECRETARY GENERAL OF GOVERNMENT, RENE VIDAL, MADE AN ALMOST IDENTICAL STATEMENT JULY 3.

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3. THE PDC REBUTTAL: THE ONE PAGE PDC DOCUMENT, DATED JULY 5 REFERES TO THE FERNANDEZ AND VIDAL STATEMENTS. IT THEN STATES THAT THE CURRENT REGIME IS IN AN ETHICAL AND POLITICAL CRISIS: " THE DANGER OF OBORDER CONFLICT IN CONDITIONS OF INTER-NATIONAL ISOLATION, THE NOW ALMOST PROVED PARTICIPATION OF CHILEAN OFFICIALS IN THE ASSASSINATION OF AN EX-CHILEAN MINISTER

ABROAD, THE INABILITY OF THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR TO PROVIDE SERIOUS AND HONEST INFORMATION ON THE HUNDREDS OF CASES OF DISAPPEARED, THE IMPOSITION OF CONTROLS ON THE PRESS" ALL CONTRIBUTE TO A SITUATION IN WHICH RUMORS ARE THE NATURAL RESULT OF THE LACK OF PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT REALLY IS HAPPENING.

4. THE DECLARATION DENIES CATEGORICALLY THE GOVERNMENT'S CHARGES THAT IT IS INVOLVED IN RUMORMONGERING AND URGES ALL CHILEANS TO DISCOUNT ANY FUTURE OR FURTHER ACCUSATIONS ALONG THESE LINES. IT CONCLUDES WITH AN EXORTATION TO THE GOC TO FACE-UP TO ITS "ETHICAL AND POLITICAL CRISIS" AND TO ELIMINATE THE CONDITIONS THAT HAVE LED TO THE WAVE OF RUMORS.

5. THE EMBASSY RECEIVED A COPY OF THE DECLARATION THROUGH THE MAIL JULY 5. APPARENTLY SO DID MANY OTHER EMBASSIES AS WELL AS THE NEWSPAPERS AND RADIO AND TV STATIONS. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED AN ORDER THE SAME DAY PROHIBITING THE MEDIA FROM REPORTING THE TEXT OF THE DECLARATION OR COMMENTING ON IT.

6. COMMENT: WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY PDC SOURCES THAT DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE MEETING LAST WEEK OF ALL CABINET OFFICIALS AND FLAG-RANK OFFICERS (REFTEL) PINOCHET SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS OUT TO GET RID OF HIM AND THAT WE ARE USING AS PAWNS THE PDC AND THE CHURCH. HE REPORTEDLY ACCUSED SOME GENERALS OF ABETTING SUCH EFFORTS.

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7. THE PDC CLAIMS TO BE AFRAID THAT THE PRESENT EFFORT TO CAST IT AS THE SOURCE OF ALL RUMORS AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF INSTABILITY IS PREPARTORY TO A CRACK-DOWN ON THE PARTY AND ITS LEADERS. THIS FEAR IS NOT YET WELL FORMED; NEVERTHELESS, THE PARTY BELIEVED IT IMPORTANT TO GET OUT A DECLARATION DEFENDING ITSELF.

8. PEC PRESIDENT ANDRES SALDIVAR SENT A LETTER TO INTERIOR MINISTER FERNANDEZ JULY 7, PROTESTING THE NES BAN ON THE PDC DECLARATION. IN THE LETTER HE REMINDS FERNANDEZ THAT AFTER THE JUNE 10 WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, PROPOSED THE PDC AS A SUCCESSOR TO THE PRESENT REGIME, GENERAL VIDAL HAD CRITICIZED THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FOR NOT COMING OUT WITH A STATEMENT DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES FROM THE WASHINGTON POST.

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